Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 19 and 32. Please amend Claims 18, 21, 24, 25, 31, 37, and 38. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1-17.   (Canceled)

18.   (Currently amended) A method of monitoring a virtual path in a ring configuration comprising:

originating at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at a source network element on the virtual path in a given direction around the virtual path; [[and]]

monitoring for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at the source network element on the virtual path to arrive at the source element in the given direction around the virtual path;

originating a second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at an intermediate network element on the virtual path in the given direction around the virtual path; and

monitoring for the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at the source network element on the virtual path to arrive at the source element in the given direction around the virtual path.

19.   (Canceled)

20.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, further comprising performing statistical multiplexing on the virtual path.

21. (Currently amended) A method of monitoring a virtual path in a ring configuration comprising:

originating at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at a source network element on the virtual path; [[and]]

monitoring for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at the source network element on the virtual path;

originating a second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at an intermediate network element on the virtual path; and

monitoring for the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at the source network element on the virtual path;

wherein the virtual path is unidirectional.

22. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein originating at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises assigning the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls to the virtual path.

23. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein monitoring for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises checking cells arrived at the source network element to find the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls.

24. (Currently amended) The method of ~~Claim 19~~ Claim 18, wherein originating a second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises assigning the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls to the virtual path.

25. (Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 19~~ Claim 18, wherein monitoring for the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises checking cells arrived at the source network element to find the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls.

26.   (Previously presented) A method of monitoring a virtual path in a ring configuration comprising:

   originating at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at an intermediate network element on the virtual path in a given direction around the virtual path; and

   monitoring for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at a source network element on the virtual path to arrive at the source element in the given direction around the virtual path.

27.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, further comprising performing statistical multiplexing on the virtual path.

28.   (Previously presented) A method of monitoring a virtual path in a ring configuration comprising:

   originating at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at an intermediate network element on the virtual path; and

   monitoring for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls at a source network element on the virtual path;

   wherein the virtual path is unidirectional.

29.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein originating at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises assigning the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls to the virtual path.

30.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 26, wherein monitoring for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises checking cells arrived at the source network element to find the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls.

31.   (Currently amended) A method of arranging a virtual path in a ring configuration comprising:

arranging a virtual circuit to permit transmission of at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls from a source network element to the source network element; [[and]]

arranging the source network element to monitor for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls;

arranging a second virtual circuit to permit transmission of a second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls from an intermediate network element to the source network element; and

arranging the source network element to monitor for the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls.

32.   (Canceled)

33.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 31, further comprising arranging the source network element to perform statistical multiplexing on the virtual path.

34.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 31, wherein the virtual path is unidirectional.

35.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 31, wherein arranging a virtual circuit to permit transmission of at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls from a source network element to the source network element comprises originating the virtual circuit at the source network element and terminating the virtual circuit at the source network element to form a ring.

36.   (Previously presented) The method of Claim 31, wherein arranging the source network element to monitor for the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises configuring the source network element to check cells arriving at the

source network element to find the at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls.

37.   (Currently amended) The method of ~~Claim 32~~ Claim 31, wherein arranging a second virtual circuit to permit transmission of a second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls from an intermediate network element to the source network element comprises originating the second virtual circuit at the intermediate network element and terminating the second virtual circuit at the source network element.

38.   (Currently amended) The method of ~~Claim 32~~ Claim 31, wherein arranging the source network element to monitor for the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls comprises configuring the source network element to check cells arriving at the source network element to find the second at least one of operations, administrative and maintenance calls.